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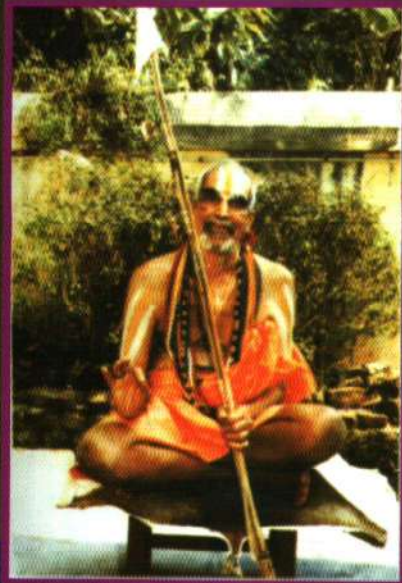
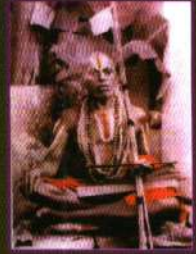
HAMSAPRIYA

*The Quarterly Newsletter of Srimad Andavan Poundarikapuram Swami Ashram
Bengaluru Branch*

Volume # 1

Enshrining Poundarikapuram Ashramam values

Issue : 6



श्रीवासरङ्ग परकालं मनित्रयाप्तं लक्ष्मात्सरक्षणं यत्नित्वं यगागमोत्तमम् ।



**Wednesday March 28th 2012,
The 92nd tirunakshatra of
H.H.Paravakottai Andavan of
Poundarikapuram Asram will be
celebrated in a very grand manner at
the asram premises.**

**We wish to submit this issue of the
newsletter at the lotus Feet of our
Acaryan on this auspicious occasion**





Sri: Sriyal Namah: Sri Ranganatha ParabrahmaNE Namah:
SrimatE Raghuveer MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Gopaladesika MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Srinivasa MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Ranganatha MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Srinivasa MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Narayana MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Srinivasa MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Srinivasa Ramanuja MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Vedanta Ramanuja MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Gopalarya MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Nigamanata MahadesikAya Namah:
SrimatE Bhagavate BhashyakarAya MahadesikAya Namah:
Srimadbhyaha: Yamuna NATHa shaTakOpa MahadesikEBhyO Namah:
Srirangam SrimadANDavan (Vazhuttur) vEdAntalakSmaNamunE:
AvicChinna Sanyasata GuruparamparA samAgatha:

Srimad Andavan Poundarikapuram Swami Asramam, Bengaluru branch

Volume #1

HAMSAPRIYA

Issue #6

*The Quarterly Newsletter of Srimad Andavan Poundarikapuram Swami Asramam,
Bengaluru Branch*

विश्वप्रिया हंसप्रिया सर्वगेह निवासिनी । पठितुं क्षेमदा भूयात् आत्मविज्ञान बोधिनी ॥

Editorial Board

Dr. A. AnanthaNarasimhachar, Bengaluru
Sri. V. Ranganathan, Bengaluru
Smt. Usha Narasimhan, Bengaluru

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Editorial

HamsaPriya seeks refuge in our new Acaryan, H.H.Srimad Raghuvveera Mahadesikan, alias Rayapuram Svami. We are indeed very fortunate as H.H.H has been a very close disciple of our beloved Paravakottai Svami for a long time and cherishes His ideals and values thereby being a true representative of Him.

Paravakottai Svami had made many invaluable contributions of which the addition to the UrdhvaPundraDhyanaStotram was unique. This stotram is printed in the taniyan book of the Asramam and is to be recited everyday while adorning 'namams' or 'pundrams' after bath. There are twelve+one slokas in this stotram – one for each 'pundram' on the body. Prior to Svami's times, there was only one line in each of the twelve slokas, signifying the name of the deity residing in the respective 'pundra' position and the divine weapons sported by Him. Svami, after consulting various scriptural texts added a first line to every sloka delineating the name of the 'thayar' and the position of the 'pundram' on the body, thereby making them complete poems. A rare collection of pictures of the Lord in His 'dvadasha'-forms - the twelve+one forms manifesting on various positions of our body, is being shared with you. We have also provided a free translation of the slokas in English. A translation of the Tamil Prabhandham 'Panniru

namam' of Svami Vedanta Desikan, is also provided. It is customary to recite this Prabhandham while propitiating the Lords of the 'dvadasha-pundras'. Svami Vedanta Desika opines that worship of these 'dvadasha' forms of Lord Varada with devotion is a sure path to moksha and a means to bhakti, what to say of all other desirable objects?

We wish to acknowledge with a deep sense of gratitude all those who have motivated us and supported our cause, especially the help rendered by

- a) Navabharathi Press, Bengaluru and U.Ve Srinivasa Rangan, Bengaluru for providing rare photographs of our beloved Svami printed in the previous issue.
- b) U.Ve. Sundar Kidambi, prapatti.com, for giving us an open permission for the perusal of the grand collection of texts of slokas and pasurams in his web site.
- c) Dr.Jayalakshmi, Bengaluru for the rare pictures of the Lord in His 'dvadasha forms', as delineated in the UrdhvaPundraDhyanaStotram.

An attempt has been made to appreciate the application of Vedanta in day-to-day life, trying to keep the narrations amicable. There is no attempt to implicate anyone whosoever; every lesson applies to each one of us and if taken in a lighter vein would be enjoyable as also easy to imbibe. Please forgive us for any misdoing, if pointed out, we will correct ourselves.

Srirangam Asram

Srimad Raghuveera MahaDesikan was coronated as the ninth Acaryan of our Poundarikapuram Asramam on 30th January 2012. It was a 2-day affair held in a serene atmosphere at Srirangam. U.Ve.D.RajagopalaChar, as He was known in *purvashrama*, performed the *jeeva-shrardham* the previous day. On the day of coronation, Svami took the vows of *sanyasa*, accepted the ascetic robes and then, after *Tiru-cauvery snanam*, was presented with the *tridandam*. Then, He was coronated with the new title of *Rayapuram Svami* and His *taniyan* was read out aloud to the delight of *Bhagavathas* present there.

Svami has already begun *kalakshepa* discourses at Asramam premises in Srirangam. He has done *grantha-catushtaya kalakshepam* under our beloved *Paravakottai Svami* will be a blessing to His disciples.

Bengaluru Asram & Tirunelmalai Asram

Regular worship is performed on all days at the asramam temple. The temple timings are 6:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. in the morning and 4:30 P.M. to 8:30 PM in the evening. Special *poojas* and *sattrumarai* are performed on days of *tirunakshatra* and *aradhana*.

Srimad Raghuveera MahaDesikan – Acarya Vandana

(U.Ve.Shri.Narasimhan and Smt.Usha Narasimhan, Bengaluru)

*Sakshaatnnaaraayano deva: krutvaa martyamayem tanum |
Magnaannuddharate lokaan kaarunyaat shaastrapaanina | |*

It is said that Sriman Narayana Himself comes again and again in the form of Acaryas with great compassion to uplift the *chetanas* who are drowned in *samsara*. Thus, with the *sankalpam* of the Lord carried through the blessings of H.H. Srimad Gopala Desika Mahadesikan who adorned the Asramam like the crown jewel, the *avicchinna Acaarya Paramparai* continues with the arrival of HH Sri Raghuveera Mahadesikan swamy as the ninth pontiff of the Asramam.

HH Sri Sri Raghuveera Mahadesikan swamy is well known to the Asramam disciples and well-wishers from the *purvashramam* days. His unique quality is that of *soulabhyam* – the ease with which He interacts with all of us in his unassuming nature despite all his scholastic abilities and achievements. We were so taken in by his simplicity that we never realized the impending divinity in him. As said in the Chandogya Upanishad

तद्यथापि हिरण्यनिधिं निहितमक्षेत्रज्ञा उपर्युपरि सञ्चरन्तो न विन्देयुः, एवमेवेमाः
सर्वाः प्रजा अहरहर्गच्छन्त्यः एतं ब्रह्मलोकं न विन्दति; अनृतेन हि प्रत्यूढाः॥८-३-२

Just as people who do not know the place where the treasure of gold is hidden, do not get it, though they move on the very ground under which the gold is hidden, in the same way, all these Jivas, although they go to the Lord day in and day out, do not get or know that Brahman. They are covered and led otherwise by 'anruta' or karma.

Although we interacted with him on so many occasions, we knew not the supreme divinity that lay hidden in him.

He is specially concerned about the betterment of younger generation. He also relates to the current generation easily through his knowledge of English which is very much in vogue today among the younger generation. Though a strict disciplinarian himself, our Acaryan interacts with everyone very kindly.

In keeping with the *satsampradaya* of our Asramam, our Acaryan is blessing disciples with *nitya kalakshepams* on *Grantha chatushtayams*. Having done *kalakshepams* of the *Grantha Chatushtayams* directly under *Srimad Gopaladesika*

Mahadesikan, our Acaryan is passing on the divine knowledge through his *anushtanam* and *kalakshepams*.

Being an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, Tamil and Hindi languages, Acaryan has penned many precious books in His *purvashramam*. His books on Sudarshana Shataka, Tiruppavai with Godastuti and Adhyatma Ramayana are noteworthy.

We seek the continued blessings of our Acaryan in carrying out our *kainkaryams* without a break.

Why all this Vedanta, di?!

Mita: I'm away to Rahasyatrayasara class, then Vedanta Sara and then Tiruvoimozhi *parayana*...

Sita: My god! Enough! Why so much Vedanta?

Mita: Well, it helps...Recall Svanishta-abhigyan-adhikara: whenever teased/chided it is for the body, not us, it relieves us off our *karmas* that transfer to the one who teases/chides, so pity him... also it is a useful reminder of our flaws etc. etc. we learn so much and they come in so handy.. but you people never realize, 'cause you are not so fortunate to participate...(puffed up with the pride of knowledge)

Sita: What can I do, I'm at His bidding. But, you seem to get upset so quickly, then why all this Vedanta, di?

The Divine Grace

(Shri. T.C.Krishnamurthy, Bengaluru)

Divine grace is one of the prime features of Vishishtadvaita. Our acaryas firmly believe that divine grace plays a distinct role for a devotee to attain liberation. It is therefore of prime importance to examine what divine grace really means and how it has to be obtained.

For that divine grace to be effective, it must emanate from the Supreme Reality – this is beyond any doubt. The relevant question that arises here is whether the Supreme reality is a mere principle or person with attributes. In the former case, human beings as they are constituted cannot possibly conceive of a deity as a mere abstract essence. The question of meditation on such a formless deity is not practicable. “The difficulty of those whose minds are set on the unmanifested is greater, for the path of the manifested is hard for the embodied to reach” – BG. 12-5. Lord Krishna by this statement has emphasized the relative advantage of devotion to the almighty with auspicious attributes which can lead one to the ultimate goal. Apart from the intellectual

inability to grasp the icy and formless absolute, our moral nature revolts from it. We would very much like to believe that God holds an important personal relation with us. Our emotional structure being what it is, we can only love, adore and worship One who appears to us in familiar human form. We can cultivate close bond with Him as our nearest and dearest, being close to our hearts – *manatakku iniyan* as goddess Goda has aptly put it. The Lord is also too eager to live with us and guide us in the righteous path. He has no scope for showing His compassion or grace in His celestial abode. He therefore manifests Himself on this earth now and then to be in our midst. Not satisfied with His rare appearances as *avatara purusha* , He elects to be with us in His *archa* form. The presence of Lord in *archa* form is the greatest boon given to us that we can ever think of. His grace is therefore ever-present here and it is open to us to qualify ourselves to be the beneficiary of His grace and progress in our spiritual life.

Lord Krishna says, "I am the same for all human beings. No one is hateful nor dear to Me. Those who worship

Me with devotion, they are in Me and I am in them". Although God treats all alike, He gives His attention and bestows grace, only on such deserving persons as qualify themselves by their loving devotion to Him. God Himself is eager to bestow the grace, but before that He chooses to see whether the devotee is intent in turning his face to Him.

Saint Nammalvar, considered to be foremost amongst the azhvars, sang over thousand songs charged with emotion and fervor before God's All-embracing grace was vouchsafed to him. The outpourings of the devotees are nothing but record of their soul's yearning for their beloved God. Such devotees feel incomplete and helpless without God who is their sole object of love and devotion.

It may be seen in conclusion that the grace of God is *not shown to anyone unsolicited but is the outcome of the burning desire of the soul to seek the lotus Feet of the Lord for achieving its high divine destiny.* Self effort, self purification, single minded devotion followed by total surrender at the Feet of the Lord, aspiring only for blissful experience of service to Him are the necessary qualifications

that render the soul fit to receive the grace of the God without any let or hindrance.

Ma Janaki's speech – noblest in Ramayana

After Vibhishana was crowned, Hanuman offers to take revenge on her tormenters. But Sita replies thus - Once upon a time, a hunter pursued by a tiger got up a big tree which was already tenanted by a bear. The tiger looked up and asked the bear to throw the man down. The bear refused citing, laws of hospitality. With this high thought, he slept. The tiger then turned to the fugitive and asked him to hurl the sleeping bear down. This the man did. The bear however caught another branch and was saved. The tiger now found a new opening and told the bear, "Look at this human, is he not a miserable ingrate? Down with him". Quietly the bear enunciated the eternal code. *A righteous man ought to be turned from the right by the sin of a sinner. The rule of honor is inviolable. Good men have only one jewel, their unblemished conduct, and they must guard it, come what may. Be they good men or bad, be they deserving of death, still must they be pardoned and treated with mercy by one claiming to be an Arya. For, no one is above error.* "So then let us give up the idea of retaliation and retribution and abstain from injury even to miscreants and persecutors of mankind." (VI-116-37-45)

- Rt. Hon.Srinivasa Sastri, in his famous book 'Lectures on Ramayana'

Book Review

Sri MahaveeraVaibhavam of Svami Vedanta Desika
English translation and notes By Dr. M.K.Srinivasan

Based on Tamil commentary By MahaVidvan Padur Puranam
Saralakavi Sri. U.Ve.Raghavachar Svami

Published by Sri NrusimhaPriya Trust

10, Venkatesha Agraharam, Mylapore, Chennai, 600 004.

Pages 172, Price Rs.200/=.

Valmiki Ramayana, our priceless asset has been a national passion of our people for over two thousand years. As time passed and generation changed it acquired worldwide recognition, appreciation and popularity. The chief merit of this epic lies in its propagation of *dharmic* way of life to be followed under all circumstances. It inspires one and all to lead a noble life. It teaches religion, ethics and morality. It holds a very high spiritual significance for the Hindu community. Even today its rendering and recitation is a part of devotional life of the Hindus.

The most remarkable feature of this epic is that it has had a fascinating and continuous evolution over these two thousand years. The charm and the power of the story captivated the imagination of many scholars, generation

after generation and they happily indulged in bringing out their versions of it not only to satisfy their inner scholastic urge but also as a reverential tribute to Lord Rama. Almost all the versions are devotion oriented.

Among the several Sanskrit versions of Ramayana, the MahaVira Vaibhavam of Svami Desika stands out as a unique and exquisite composition. In the hands of Svami Desika the Kavitarika Simha, the story of Lord Rama moves with a rhythmic and mellifluous flow like a gigantic river meandering its way through the plains and hilly tracks. He has adopted the *churnika* style of prose which employs minimum of words to convey maximum message. In *churnika* 47 which consists of just two lines, Svami Desika in his inimitable style is credited to have admirably condensed the entire Sundara Kanda. The whole work is made up of just 93 *churnikas* and covers without any omission all the episodes of the original even as a small mirror can capture all details of a mighty elephant. Such works therefore need elaborate commentaries to unravel the hidden meanings of the *churnikas*.

Sri U.Ve.Raghavacharya Svami of Padur, a talented scholar in Sanskrit and Tamil wrote an elaborate commentary on this work in Tamil a few years ago. Dr.M.K.Srinivasan, an erudite scholar and a prolific writer has to his credit several works on Vaishnavism and Visistadvaita. He is a regular contributor of articles on philosophy, religion etc. to several spiritual magazines such as NrisimhaPriya (English), Sri Desika Seva, Anjali and HamsaPriya. His English translation bears the stamp of his matured approach and measured style. His thought provoking notes have enhanced the merit of the work. We earnestly hope that this book will receive worldwide recognition and a large readership that it richly deserves.

Sri.T.C.Krishnamurthy

Sri Rama's noble verdict!

Shri Rama chose His words carefully and said, "Even if Vibhishana may have all the faults mentioned by you, let us remember that he has approached me as a friend, and sought my protection. Righteous people will never discard a friend in distress, although he may have a myriad of faults. My vow is to protect every type of seeker and aspirant should they appeal to me".

- Dr.M.K.Srinivasan, in the book reviewed above

Sri Yamunacharya or Sri Alavandar

Sri Manakkal Nambi had five disciples of whom Sri Alavandar was the principal one. As mentioned earlier, Sri Nambi took the unusual step of befriending Sri Alavandar and imparting spiritual knowledge to him. While normally it was the disciple (*sishtya*) who would seek a preceptor (*guru*), the position got reversed in the case of Sri Alavandar and Sri Nambi. Such incidents are rare in this world, but where they exist, they show the keen interest the *guru* has in educating the *sishtya*. When Sri Alavandar was taken to Srirangam by Sri Nambi (please see last issue for details), the former was reaching sixty years of age. For the next sixty years, Sri Alavandar would spread the philosophy of Visishtadvaita after acquiring a thorough knowledge of the system from his *acharya*, Sri Nambi. He wrote eight works including *stotras* and detailed texts on the three *tattvas*, a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* and a treatise on the *Pancharatra Agamas*.

He gave some illuminating discourses to the public, which were attended by large gatherings. Learning and scholarship sat lightly on him. He was modesty personified. Modesty and humility go together. A person is said to be modest if he takes a humble view of his abilities or achievements. Sri Alavandar was one such person. This quality is evident in all his writings. He softened his criticism by saying that 'even scholars can err if their acumen is colored by partisan views'. Sometime after he reached Srirangam, he forsook the kingdom he was ruling over and offered the entire land to Lord Ranganatha. He took to ascetic orders when he was eighty years of age. He acquired several disciples and all became great scholars in their own right. From among them, he chose the best and sent them in various directions to explain to the people the system of Visishtadvaita, as propounded by his grandfather Sri Nathamuni. Once after hearing from his disciples about Sri Ramanuja, who was then a youth in his teens, Sri Alavandar went to Kanchipuram to look at him and assess his usefulness to the *sampradaya* in future. Having seen Sri Ramanuja and formed a good

impression about him, Sri Alavandar mentally decided to make him his successor. But because Sri Ramanuja was at that time a student of Sri Yadavaprakasa, Sri Alavandar did not want to disturb him in his studies. Another reason for his reluctance to disturb him was Sri Alavandar wanted Sri Ramanuja to know thoroughly the basics of Vedanta philosophy as taught by opposite schools, before he could frame effective arguments to counter them.

There is another incident which points to Sri Alavandar's foresightedness. One of his four sons, Sri Pillai Arasu Nambi, along with Sri Periya Nambi, undertook a journey to the northern most parts of the country, under instructions from Sri Alavandar. The idea was to confirm the availability of the Bodhayana's commentary on the *Brahmasutras*, which was stated to be preserved in Sarasvati Peetham at Kashmir. The two pilgrims found such a commentary in existence and reported the matter to Sri Alavandar. This was the background to Sri Ramanuja visiting Kashmir several years later and thereafter writing his well

known *Sribhashya* based on Bodhayana's commentary. Thus Sri Alavandar left behind a rich legacy, both in the form of men and materials for his successor to utilize and develop the philosophy.

Svami Desika refers to Sri Alavandar as our protector who saves us from the trials of worldly life and also as our role-model to emulate.

(To be continued.)

Lord is the Independent Actor, we're reactors!

Guru: (warningly): Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore, one must be very watchful of one's conduct....

Shisya: Sir, we are helpless. All our actions are only reactions. By the way sir, who did the first action?

Guru: (laughs): Only Lord possesses Independent Doership. He grants it to us for a moment- at the time of choosing an action. However, completion of the action is dictated by our *karma vasanas*. Thus we have the freedom to uplift ourselves by choosing *shreyas* or righteous actions. This concept is explained in detail as the *prathama pravrutti* in Shri Bhasya.

Panniru namam of Svami Vedanta Desikan

(By Shri. P.S.Srinivasan, Bengaluru. Based on Tamil work of Lifco Publication)

It is essential and customary for Srivaishnavites to adorn the twelve *oordhvapundras* in the specified parts of the body, daily after bath, uttering the Lord's twelve names, starting from Keshava to Damodara. These sacred marks represent the divine lotus feet of Lord Vishnu. In his beautiful poetic rendering in Tamil, entitled 'Panniru namam' meaning 'twelve pundras', Svami Vedanta Desika has described the twelve different forms of the Lord, their respective body complexions, the weapons they hold, the different directions they govern and the parts of our body that they manifest themselves. One ought to recite these pasurams while adorning the pundras over one's body, thus invoking His divine presence.

*panniru nāmam tiruvattiyūr pparan pādamenru**
*nannira nāmam paḍai tikki yāvaiyum nāmaṛiya**
*tennan tamiz tṭoḍai cēṛār kalitturai ōdi indān**
minnuṟu nūlamar vēṅgaḍanādan nam dēṣikanē

Our revered preceptor, Sri Venkatanathan of Thoopul, who adorned the effulgent sacred thread, considered the twelve oordhvapundra marks to be symbolic of the holy feet of the Lord of Hastigiri and described in sweet southern Tamil lyrics the holy name, shade of complexion, weapons held and the directions in which the presiding deities of those respective *pundras* reside, in order that we adorn them accordingly.

kār koṇḍa mēṇiyan pādām puyattai kkaruttirutti
ērkoṇḍa kīrtti irāmānuṣan tan iṇaiyaḍiṣēr*
śīrkoṇḍa tūppul tiruvēṅgaḍāriyan śirmoziyai*
ārkoṇḍu pōṛṛinum ammāl padattai aḍaivikkumē*

Whosoever meditates on the lotus feet of the dark cloud colored Lord and prays keeping in mind the divine composition of Sri Venkataryan of Thoopul, admirer of the holy Feet of the revered Bhagavad Ramanuja Acarya, shall attain the Divine Feet of the Lord.

†kēśavanāy ninṛu kīzai ttiṣaiyilum nerriyilum*
tēsudai āzigaḷ nānguḍan* śem paśum ponmalaipōl*
vāśimiguttenai* maṅgāmal kākkum maraiyadanāl*
āśaimigutta* ayan maka vēdiyil aṛbudanē (1)*

ऊर्ध्वपुण्ड्रध्यान श्लोकाः





ललाटे सततं देव्या
श्रिया सह विराजितम् ।
चतुश्चक्रं नमस्यामि
कैशवं कनक प्रभम् ॥१॥

I supplicate (नमस्यामि) the golden-hued (कनक प्रभम्) Lord Keshava (कैशवं) along with Devi Shri (देव्या श्रिया सह); He is ever-radiant on the forehead (ललाटे सततं विराजितम्) and sports four *chakras* (चतुश्चक्रं) – one in each of His four Hands

अमृतोद्भवया देव्या
समाश्लिष्टं अथोदरे ।
नारायणं घनश्यामं
चतुश्शङ्खं नमाम्यहम् ॥२॥

Next (अथ), I bow to (नमाम्यहम्) the dark-black-hued (घनश्यामं) Lord Narayana (नारायणं) who resides at the centre of the stomach (उदरे) region; He is united with Devi Amrutodhbhava (अमृतोद्भवया देव्या समाश्लिष्टं) and sports four conches (चतुश्शङ्खं) – one in each of His four Hands.



नित्यं कमलयाश्लिष्टं
हृदये करुणाम्बुधिम् ।
माधवं मणिभङ्गाभं
चिन्तयामि चतुर्गदम् ॥३॥

I meditate on (चिन्तयामि) the deep-blue-hued (color of the insides of the broken part of a blue gemstone) (मणिभङ्गाभं) Lord Madhava (माधवं) who is in ever-unison with Devi Kamala (नित्यं कमलयाश्लिष्टं) at the heart region (हृदये); He is an ocean of compassion (करुणाम्बुधिम्) and sports four maces (चतुर्गदम्) – one in each of His four Hands.



देव्या च चन्द्रशोभिन्या
मम कण्ठे विराजितम् ।
चन्द्रभासं चतुरशार्ङ्गम्
गोविन्दमभिसम्श्रये ॥४॥

I seek refuge unto (अभिसम्श्रये) the moon-hued (चन्द्रभासं) One who embellishes my throat region (मम कण्ठे विराजितम्), the Lord Govinda (गोविन्दं) and Devi ChandraShobhini (देव्या चन्द्रशोभिन्या च); He sports four bows (चतुरशार्ङ्गम्) – one in each of His four Hands





विष्णुपत्न्याख्यया देव्या
कुक्षौदक्षिणपार्श्वगम् ।
विष्णुं चतुर्हलं वन्दे
पद्मकिञ्जल्कसन्निभम् ॥५॥

I salute (वन्दे) Lord Vishnu
(विष्णुं) along with His Devi
whose name is VishnuPatni
(विष्णुपत्न्याख्यया देव्या); He
appears like a lotus filament
(पद्मकिञ्जल्कसन्निभम्) and
sports four ploughs (चतुर्हलं)
– one in each of His four
Hands; He resides on the
right side of the belly region
(कुक्षौदक्षिणपार्श्वगम्).

वैष्णवीसंज्ञया देव्या
कलितं दक्षिणे भुजे।
चतुर्मुसलमब्जाभं
सम्श्रये मधुसूदनम् ॥६॥

I seek refuge (सम्श्रये) in that
Lord Madhusoodhana who is
united with His Devi,
Vaishnavi by name
(वैष्णवीसंज्ञया देव्या कलितं
मधुसूदनम्); He has the hue of
the lotus (अब्जाभं) and is
placed on the right shoulder
(दक्षिणे भुजे); He sports as
weapons four pestles
(चतुर्मुसलं) – one in each of
His four Hands.



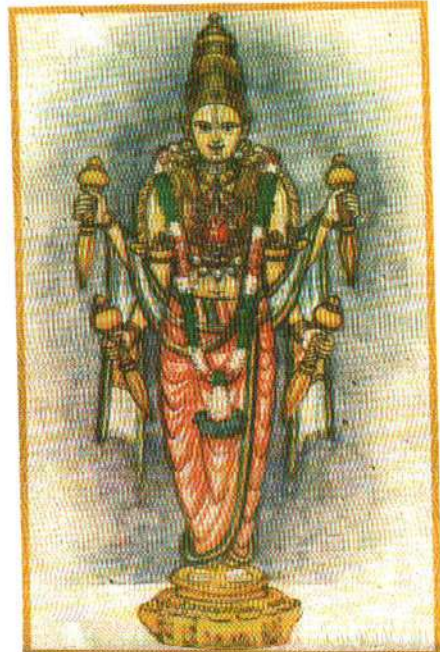


कण्ठस्य दक्षिणेपार्श्वे
वरारोहाधिपं प्रभुम् ।
अग्निवर्णं चतुःखड्गं
भावयामि त्रिविक्रमम् ॥७॥

I meditate upon (भावयामि) the fire-hued One (अग्निवर्णं) Lord Trivikrama (त्रिविक्रमम्) who resides on the right side of the throat (कण्ठस्य दक्षिणेपार्श्वे) region; He is the Lord of Vararooha Devi (वरारोहाधिपं प्रभुम्) and sports four swords (चतुःखड्गं) – one in each of His four Hands.

हरिवल्लभया देव्या
वामकुक्षौ स्थितं हरिम् ।
वामनं बालसूर्याभं
चतुर्वज्रं विभावये ॥८॥

I discern (विभावये) that Lord Vamana (वामनं) along with His Devi HariVallabha (हरिवल्लभया देव्या), placed on the left side of the belly (वामकुक्षौ स्थितं) region; He has the hue of the rising sun (बालसूर्याभं) and sports as weapons four thunderbolts (चतुर्वज्रं) – one in each of His four Hands.





वामबाहौ महाबाहुं
शार्ङ्गिण्याः पतिमव्ययम् ।
श्रीधरं पुण्डरीकाभं
चतुःपट्टस्समाश्रये ॥१॥

I seek refuge (समाश्रये) in Lord Sridhara (श्रीधरं) the broad shouldered (महाबाहुं), eternal Lord of Devi Sharangini (शार्ङ्गिण्याः पतिमव्ययम्); He is present on the left shoulder (वामबाहौ); sporting four specialized swords (चतुःपट्टस) as weapons He is effulgent as a white lotus (पुण्डरीकाभं).

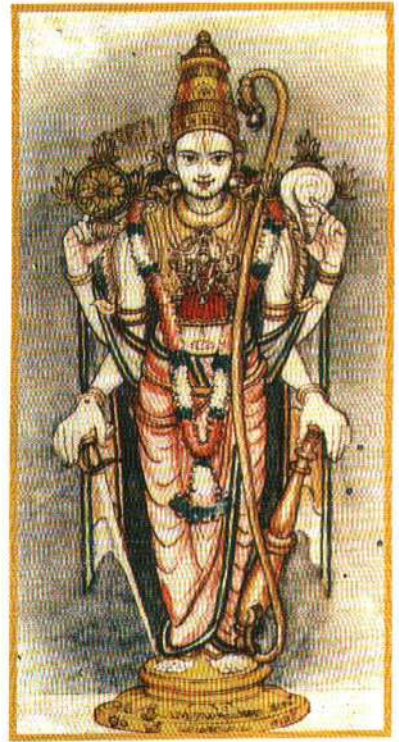
देवदेविकया देव्या
वामकण्ठे विभासितं ।
चतुर्मुद्गरमभ्येमि
हृषीकेशं तदित्प्रभम् ॥१०॥

I approach with reverence (अभ्येमि) One with the effulgence of lightning (तदित्प्रभम्) Lord Hrushiksha (हृषीकेशं) who along with Devi Devadevika (देवदेविकया देव्या) shines on the left side of the throat (वामकण्ठे विभासितं); He sports four hammers (चतुर्मुद्गरं) – one in each of His four Hands.



कटिमध्यगया देव्या
महालक्ष्म्या विराजितम् ।
पञ्चायुधं पद्मनाभं
प्रणमाम्यर्करोचिषम् ॥११॥

I bow down to (प्रणमामि)
Lord Padmanabha
(पद्मनाभं) who is effulgent
like the sun (अर्करोचिषम्)
and adorns the rear mid-
waist region (कटिमध्यगया
विराजितम्) along with Devi
Mahalakshmi (महालक्ष्म्या
देव्या); He sports five varied
weapons (पञ्चायुधं).



अवटौ सुरसन्दर्याः
पतिमद्भुत रूपिणम् ।
दामोदरं चतुःपाशं
इन्द्रगोपनिभं भजे ॥१२॥



I worship (भजे) the amazingly
handsome (अद्भुत रूपिणम्) Lord
Damodara (दामोदरं) who has a hue
like the Indragopa – glowing
rain- insect (इन्द्रगोपनिभं); He
resides at the back of the neck
(अवटौ) and is the Lord of Devi
Surasundari (सुरसन्दर्याः पतिः); He
sports four nooses as His
weapons (चतुःपाशं) – one in each
of His four Hands.

सर्वेषामखिलाभीष्टफलदाश्लिष्टविग्रहम् ।

वासुदेवमुपासेहं पूर्णेन्दुयुतसन्निभम् ॥१३॥

I worship (उपासेहं) Lord Vasudeva (वासुदेव) who is effulgent as a ten-thousand full moons (पूर्णेन्दु-अयुतसन्निभम्) united with Devi Sarva-abhishta-phala-dayini - one who grants all desires of all people (सर्वेषाम्-अखिल-अभीष्ट-फलदा-आश्लिष्ट-विग्रहम्); He resides on the centre of the head.



Having realized by means of the Vedas that Perarulalan, the benevolent Lord of Hastigiri is Supreme, Brahma performed the yagna in which the amazing Lord appeared as **Kesava** in the East, taking position on the forehead of the devotee, armed with four glowing *Chakrayudhas* (discuss shaped weapon); He shall stand firmly as a great golden mountain and protect me from destruction.

nāraṇanāy nal valamburi nālum ugandeduttum*
 ūraṇi mēgam enavē* udaramum mērku ninrum*
 āraṇanūl tandaruḷāl* aḍaikkalam koṇḍaruḷum*
 vāraṇaverpil* mazai mugilpōl ninṇa māyavanē (2)*

This amazingly powerful Perarulalan, who stands on Hastigiri as a dark rain-bearing cloud, appears in the West as **Narayana**; the *pundra* position being the belly, holding four great right-notched conches in His Hand, propagating Vedas and thereby showing the direction for salvation, He has graced to accept me as an object worthy of His protection.

mādava nāmamum vāngadai nāngu maṇiniṇṇamum*
 ōdum uṇaiṇṇaḍi ēndi* urattilumēlum algi*
 pōdalar māduḍan* pundiyil anbāl pugundaḷikkum*
 tūdanum nādanumāya* tol attigiri ccuḍarē (3)*

The Lord who is the master of all, who also served as the messenger of Pandavas and who dwells in the age-old Hastigiri as the glorious and benevolent Peraulalan, bears the name **Madhava**, has the bright hue of blue diamond, holds four strong maces as defined in the shashtras, faces the upper direction and manifests as the *pundra* on the chest of the devotee. Along with His Divine Love, He shall enter my mind in the company of His Divine consort - the Lady of the Lotus, and bless me.

gōvindan enṟum kuḷirmadiyāgi kkoḍiyavarai*
ēvum tanukkaḷuḍan* terkilum utkazuttu ninṟu*
mēvum tiruvaruḷal* vinaitirttenai aṇḍaruḷum*
pūvan toza* attimāmalai mēl ninṟa puṇṇiyanē (4)*

Firmly rooted on the huge Hastigiri mountain, the gracious Lord lets Brahma who originated from a lotus on His Navel, to worship Himself. He also becomes **Govinda**, matching the moon both in coolness and complexion and standing in the southern direction with four strong bows for driving out the wicked people, takes His position on the middle of my neck, cleanses me of all sins and captivates me.

viṭṭu valavayirrin kaṇ vaḍakkum viḍādu ninru*
 maṭṭaviz tamarai ttādu* niraṅgonḍa mēniyanāy*
 totṭakalappaigal* iriraṇḍālum tuyar arukkum*
 kaṭṭezil sōlai* kkarigirimēl ninra karpagamē (5)*

On top of the Hastigiri mountain surrounded by beautiful groves, our gracious Lord stands firmly like a Kalpavruksha (the tree that fulfils all wishes of one who prays under its shade). As **Vishnu** He takes the Northern direction, the complexion of His body being similar to the shade of the pollen of the lotus flower; He shall drive away my sorrows by the two pairs of ploughs held in His Hands.

maduśūdanan en valappuyam ten kizakkenṟivarṟil*
 padiyāy irundu* pon madurai paṅgaya vaṇṇanumay*
 mudu māvinaigal arukkum* muyalaṅgal iriraṇḍal*
 maduvār ilam pozil* vārana verpin mazaimugile (6)*

As bountiful as the monsoon cloud over the Hastigiri, which is surrounded by luscious honey-filled young plants and groves, the Lord stands firmly in the south-eastern direction as **Madhusoodhana** and takes the *pundra* position on my right arm; He has a complexion similar to that of Lotus in which Lakshmi resides and annihilates all my sins

accumulated over endless previous births with His two pairs of pestles (*musala*).

tiruvikkiraman tigaz tī niṟattan telivuḍaivāl**
uruvi kkarāṅgaḷil iriraṇḍēndi valakkazuttum**
śruvikkaramattarakkar tikkum śirandaḷumīrai**
maruvi kkarigirimēl varam tandiḍum mannavanē (7)*

The Lord who resides on the Hastigiri as an emperor, granting all the desired boons, stands tall as **Trivikrama** in the demon's direction of south-west; with a complexion as bright as glowing fire, He shall protect me well with two pairs of sharp and shining swords drawn out and held in His Hands.

vāmanan enṇan vāmōdaramum vāyuvīn diśaiyum**
tāmam aḍaindu taruṇa arukkanīṟattanumāy**
śēmamarakkalam śempavi iriraṇḍāl tigazum**
nāmaṅgai mēviya nānmugan vēdiyil namparanē (8)*

Our almighty Perarulalan who appeared at the sacrificial altar (*yagna vedi*) of Brahma the Lord of Sarasvathi, appears as **Vamana**, with the bright red shade of the rising sun; taking the north-western direction of the wind-god Vayu and a position on my left belly, He serves as a ship for the

devotees to cross the vast ocean of *samsara* (never ending cycles of birth and death) with His two pairs of Vajrayudhas.

śīrār śīrīdaranāy ccivan dikkum ida ppuyamum*
ērār idaṅkoṇḍu* ilaṅguveṇ tamarai mēniyanāy*
pārāya paṭṭayam* īr iraṇḍālum payamarukkum*
ārāvamudu* attimāmalai mēl ninṛa accutanē (9)*

Our Lord Acyutha who never lets down His devotees and who is ever-satiating as the divine-nectar, comes as the famous **Sridhara** with bright white complexion of white lotus flower; taking the north-eastern direction of Siva and a position on my left shoulder, He cuts down my fears with His two pairs of Pattaya swords.

en iruḍikēśan irai kīz idaḥkazuttenṛivaṛṛil*
nannilai minnuruvāy* nālu muṛgaram koṇḍalikkum*
pon agil śērndalaikkum* punal vēgai vaḍagaraiyil*
tennan ugandu tozum* tēnavēdiyar deyvam onrē (10)*

On the northern banks of river Vegavati, whose flooding waters roll out gold particles and the sweet-smelling Akil wood, resides the one and only Lord Perarulalan, the god of the Vedic elders of the Tenambakkam village who are worshipped by the Pandiya king. He is also my Lord

Hrushikesha, bright as the lightning, governing the downward direction; with the *pundra* position being the left side of the neck, He protects me with four hammers as His weapons.

em paṇṇābanum enpin manam paṇṇi manninṇu*
vempon kadiravan āyiram* mēviya meyyuruvāy*
ampon karaṅgaḷil* aimpadaḷi koṇḍaṇḷal enṇaḷikkum*
sempon tirumadiḷ śūz* śindurāśala cēvaganē (11)*

Hastigiri is surrounded by well laid out golden red compound wall and its heroic Lord has become my beloved **Padmanabha** with body and complexion as bright and glowing as thousand hot suns, positioned in my mind and the *pundra* spot being the back side of my body. He holds five weapons in His beautiful red hands, beckons me to be fearless and protects me.

iḍāmōḍaran enṇan tāmāṅgaḷ nālu karaṅgaḷil koṇḍu*
āmōḍaram ena* āgāttin utpuraṁ pin kazuttum*
tām ōr ilāṅkadirōṇ ena* ennul iruḷ aṟukkum*
māmōga māṇṇum* madiḷ attiyūrin maragaḍame (12)*

Perarulalan of Hastigiri, surrounded by a compound wall, is quite capable of dispelling the huge lump of ignorance. He becomes my beloved **Damodara** with the bright complexion

of a rising sun and the *pundra* position on the back of my neck; being inside and outside my body and holding four *pasa* strings in His Hands and standing stiff as though challenging all else's glory, He cuts the dark gloom of ignorance from my mind.

†katti ttiriyum kalaigalai vellum karuttil vaittu*
pattikkurutuṇai* pannirunāmam payilbavarkku*
muttikku mūlamenavē mozinda* immūṇṇu nāngum*
tittikkum eṅgal* tiruvattiyūrarai ccērbavarkkē (13)*

Mere skills (of debating etc.) are of little use; experts in such arts can be won over in a battle of wits with a mind firmly established in this work (*panniru namam*). These twelve (three multiplied four times) holy names (*panniru namam*) of the Lord, such as Keshava etc. are the only means of Bhagavat Bhakti (devotion towards god) and the key for deliverance (moksha). Only those who faithfully worship Lord Peraulalan of Attiyur (Hastigiri) uttering these twelve names with *pundras* in their respective positions, shall find this *panniru namam* to be sweet and soothing for the mind.

Kaamaasikaa ashtakam of Svami Vedanta Desika

(By Dr.Gopala Rangarajan)

Based on SreeraamadeSikaachaar's rendering in Tamil

'ThiruveLukkai' is the name given by Peyaazhvaar to a sacred shrine of Lord Yoganarasimha near Kaancheepuram. It is a modification of Thiru + VeL + Irukkai. VedaanthadeSikan has translated it into 'Kaamaasikaa' and composed eight verses in Sanskrit extolling the Deity who occupies a spot which is close to his own birthplace, Thooppil.

*Srutheenaam uththaram bhaagam vegavathyaascha dakshiNam/
Kaamaad adhivasan jeeyaath kaSchid adbhutha kesaree//*

The Sruthis (vedas) are divided into *poorva* and *uththara bhaagas*. The *uththarabhaaga* consists of the *upanishaths* which speak of the glory of Brahman i.e. of God. They also explain the concept of God. Lord Yoganarasimha of ThiruveLukkai occupies this *uththarabhaaga* of the Sruthis, since He is the subject matter of the Upanishaths. He also occupies the southern bank of river Vegavathee in this place. He occupies this spot of His own free will, choice and wish.

May He, the incomparable, wonderful celestial lion, flourish!

*thapana indu agni nayanah thaapaan apachinothu nah/
thaapaneeya rahasyaanaam saarah kaamaasikaaharih//*

The meditative verses (dhyana Sloka) on Lord Narasimha refer to Him as three-eyed. DeSikan states here that the sun, the moon and fire are the three eyes. The sun is hot even from afar. The moon is cool. Fire is hot if one gets close to it but is cool if one stays away from it. May these three eyes dispel our distress which is also threefold (*thaapathraya*). There is an Upanishad known as NRsimha thaapaneeyam which is referred to by DeSikan when he calls Lord Narasimha at ThiruveLukkai as the essence of the secrets of the Upanishads. Rather simple and direct.

In this verse there is an invocation to the appearance of Lord Narasimha with three eyes whose looks should ward off all our distress in worldly existence because He is the quintessence of the divine secrets expounded by the Upanishads.

*AakaNTham aadipurusham KaNTheeravamupari kuNThitha araathim/
vegopakaNThasangaath vimukthavaikuNThabahumathim upaase//*

I propitiate the One who has the form of the Primordial Man up to the neck and of a roaring lion above who destroys enemies and who has ceased to regard even His celestial abode, VaikuNTha, because of the association with the environs of the river Vegaa(Vegavathi). Vegavathi is the name of the river flowing near ThiruveLukkai. In ancient times Goddess Sarasvathi is supposed to have assumed the form of a rapid river who was hence known as Vegavathi and flown past the sacrificial site of Brahma in this spot in order to hinder the proceedings thereof.

In this verse the stress on the word *kaNTha*, *vaikuNtha*, *kaNTheerava* etc like on *thaapa*, *thaapaneeya*, *thapana* etc in the previous verse, displays the fondness of DeSikan for *Sabda alankaara*, such as alliteration besides *arthha alankaara* such as *Slesha* (pun) on the words *Uththara* and *dakshiNa* in the first verse.

*Bandhum akhilasya janthoh BandhuraparyankabandharamaNeeyam/
Vishamavilochanam eede Vegavathee puLiina keLi narasimham//*

I salute Lord Narasimha who is the dear relative of all living beings and who has adopted the pleasing posture of 'paryankabandha (' Posture of a cot), has an odd number (three) of eyes and sports on the sands of the river, Vegavathi.

*svasthhaaneshu marudgaNaan niyamayan svaadheena sarvendriyah
paryankasthhiradhaaraNaapratatitha prathyangmukhaavasthithih/
praayeNa`praNipedushaam prabhurasau yogam nijam Sikshayan
kaamaan aathanuthaad aSeshajagathaam kaamaasikaa kesaree//*

He who is in complete possession of his senses directs the wind gods to their various positions. He has adopted the posture of *Paryanka bandha* and exhibits a gaze directed westwards (inwards). Perhaps He is teaching those who sought refuge in Him the art of meditating upon Him. May this Lion in Kaamaasikaa bestow all desires on all the inhabitants of the worlds. This verse explains how Yoga

Narasimha adopts the posture appropriate to meditation and introspection and controls the life force (*praaNa*) through breath control (*praaNaayaama*) and positions the five winds (*vaayu's*) viz. *praaNa*, *apaana*, *vyaana*, *udaana*, *samaana* in their appropriate places prior to contemplation on God.

vikasvara nakhasvaru kshatha hiraNyavakshasthalee
nirargaLa vinirgaLad rudhira sindhusandhiyaayithaah/
avanthu madanaasikaa manuja panchavakthrasya maam
aham prathhamikaamithihah prakatithaahavaa baahavah//

May the arms of the Man - lion of Kaamaasikaa which display the act of war by competing with each other saying 'Let me be the first!' - arms which were like the dawn (or twilight) owing to the sea of blood which flowed without interruption when the chest of the demon , HiraNya, was pierced by the thunderbolt like fully extended nails - protect me.

Here Kaamaasikaa is referred to as Madanaasikaa because Madana is a synonym of Kaama, (Cupid). The alliterative phrases '*vikasvara nakhasvaru*', *nirargaLa vinirgaLad*' are

onomatopoeic and echo the sense in depicting the scene of Narasimha slaying the demon king, HiraNyakaSyapa, with his bare nails by piercing his chest and causing his blood to flow without end, as if the bolts of a floodgate had been removed. *ArgaLa* is the bolt which is used to close the gates of a city. See '*puraargaLaadeergha bhujo bubhoja*' - RaghuvamSam.

*sataapatala bheeshaNe sarabhasa attahaasodbhate
sphurath krudhi parisphutad bhrukutike api vakthre krthe/
krpaa kapatakesarin danujadimbhadaththasthanaa
sarojasadrSaa drSaa vyathibhishajya the vyajyathe//*

Oh, deceitful Lion! Your grace manifests in two totally different ways: with rage towards HiraNya exhibited by your face with terrifying mane, boisterous and uncontrolled haughty laughter and fluttering eyebrows and at the same time with mercy flowing from the glances of your lotus like eyes towards the demon child, Prahlaada, as if offering the milk from a mother's breast, thus providing medical treatment of a very fanciful kind!

*Thvayi rakshathi rakshakaih kim anyaih
thvayi cha arakshathi rakshakaih kim anyaih/
ithi niSchiothadheeh Srayaami nithyam
Nrhare vegavathee thataaSrayam thvaam//*

Oh Lord Narasimha! If you protect me what is the need for other protectors? If you do not protect me what again is the use of other protectors? Thus convinced I always seek refuge in you who has chosen to dwell on the banks of the river, Vegavathi.

Perumal is the root cause of everything

In a kalakshepam, the guru raised his finger making a point: "Perumal alone is the root cause of everything..." he said gingerly. At once, a student Perumal by name, defended, "No sir, no sir... I didn't do anything at all." The guru laughed and said, "Oh no. I never meant you. I was talking of the Supreme Lord". He continued merrily, "Treat the clerk as if he is the boss & you will gain, but vice-versa is disastrous. Likewise, it is blasphemy to see your relative in God; but the vice-versa i.e. seeing God in all, is divine. The principle of Prateekopasana explained in the BrahmaSutras elucidates this point in detail."

Rahasya-ratnavali-hrudayam – Part 2

(Smt. Shalini Narayanan, Chennai)

A feature of Svami Desika's esoteric works is that he commences and ends them with either a *sloka* in Sanskrit or a *pasuram* in Tamil. The opening verse contains the essence of the text that follows. So too for the *Rahasya-ratnavali* and the *Rahasya-ratnavali-hrudayam*, Svami Desika has written a beautiful introductory verse.

***Onre pugalenru unarndavar kattat tiruvarulal
anre adaikkalam konda nam attigirittirumaal
inre isaiyin inaiyadi serppar inippiravom
nanre varuvadellam namakkub bharamonrilade***

Onre pugalenru unarndavar – It means 'those who have realized that there is only one Refuge for all'. Here it refers to the *acaryas* who guide the souls to seek refuge at the Lord's Feet. The Supreme Being, Sriman Narayana, is the sole Refuge of all animate and inanimate beings in the entire creation. The *Vedas* and other scriptural texts proclaim this fact. Further, a study of the *Vedas* throws more light on the

nature of the '*arthapanchaka*', or the five doctrines viz. (1) *Praapya* or the Goal i.e. Brahman, (2) *Praapaka* - the soul who strives for the Goal, (3) *Praapti-Upaaya* - The means to attain the goal (*Bhakti-yoga* or *Prapatti*), (4) *phalam* – or the Fruit of performing the *upaaya* (loving, guileless, unblemished eternal service to the divine Couple), and (5) *Praapti-virodhi* or obstacles in the means to attaining the Goal. The wise preceptors have realized the Lord's infinite mercy and kindness and hence Svami Desika refers to them as '*unarndavar*'. The word '*unarndavar*', that is 'realized' or 'evolved' refers to an ideal preceptor who is not only a repository of knowledge, but also has put into practice what is learnt. It is through such a wise teacher that the supreme Lord Narayana and His Consort Goddess Mahalakshmi operate in guiding the erring souls in the Universe. And such preceptors are the 'realised' teachers, whom Svami Desika refers to here. '*onre pugalenak katta*' means 'revealing to us that there is only one Refuge'. A revered preceptor will teach his disciples, without expecting anything in return from them. Besides, he is so compassionate towards his disciples

that he overlooks their faults even as the compassionate Lord would do. These *acharyas* gently guide the souls to the Feet of Sriman Narayana after seeking Goddess Sri's intercession on their behalf. Having realised that the Lord is the only refuge, these kind-hearted acharyas want to share this knowledge with all their disciples. They do so by reciting the three esoteric mantras and teaching their meanings to the disciples.

tiruvavural – This term denotes the grace of Goddess Sri. In this world, it is only due to the grace of the preceptor that one can reach *moksha*. An *acharya* or preceptor prays to Goddess Sri who is the Mediatrix and on our behalf intercedes with the Lord. The Lord is the Administrator of the universe and, towards that end, He has laid down His Will – the scriptures. He has to punish those who go against the rules. Such a person, who wishes to be absolved of his sins and regain the goodwill of the Lord, approaches Goddess Sri by means of an Acharya; She will recommend our case to Him. She is inseparable from Lord Narayana, and chooses to overlook the faults of Her subjects, let alone

punish them. The Lord abides by His Consort, Goddess Sri's requests. So it is through Her Grace that an aspirant for liberation can approach Srīman Narayana. In the first sentence of the *pasuram*, Svami Desika has brought out the essence of the three esoteric mantras.

anre adaikkalam konda nam athigirithirumaal – Though the word '*anre*' normally would mean 'on that very day', in this context it means 'at that very instant'. Having accepted our surrender, the Supreme Being who resides at Hastigiri, and who is the Personification of solidity and steadfastness, will never go back on His word of giving us liberation as per our request. Then, we may wonder as to why the need for this term 'at that instant'. This term is meant for the soul and not for the Lord. The human mind is always wavering. Having performed surrender now, we may have second thoughts, doubt our decision, and wish for something else, viz. enjoyment of the so called pleasures of other worlds – *svarga* etc. and would even wish to undo our 'surrender' – all in our folly. For that reason, this act of surrender performed just once with all its prerequisites, is accepted by the Lord

instantly and irrevocably. He is steadfast in all of His actions, there is absolutely no likelihood of our surrender failing.

inre isaiyin inaiyadi serppar – The meaning of this phrase is ‘The Lord will take us into His fold today itself, if only, we want it that way’. The time when the *prapanna* chooses to reach the Lotus Feet of the Lord, is left to the choice of the *prapanna* himself. Having performed the surrender, the *prapanna* is assured of attaining *moksha*. But he can choose to be liberated at the end of his present birth, or at that very moment. He can even specify a certain time after which he would like to leave his body and reach the Lord’s Abode.

inippiravom – The words mean ‘we shall not be born again’. The *prapanna* is relieved from the worry of future births; he spends his time contemplating on the Lord, His auspicious qualities, and serving the Lord and His devotees in various ways.

Nanre varuvadellam namakkub bharamonriladhe – This phrase means, ‘whatever follows is for the good; there is no burden for us to bear’.

Svami Desika assures a *prapanna* that there will neither be any impending doom nor any lapse by him in this life. He should be rest assured that, by following the correct code of conduct in his life and by meditating on the Lord in all his spare time, there is no scope for any faults in his lifestyle. All that follows is for his good. Hence he need not worry. He should spend his time in pleasant anticipation of his journey towards the Supreme Abode. At the end of this gloomy existence, which in the larger scheme of things, is but a dark night, a glorious dawn will follow which will only blossom into complete radiance ever after, never to fade again.

Conclusion

Thus, in this beautiful Tamil poem, Svami Desika outlines the journey of a soul seeking salvation wherein he is guided by an *acharya* onto the path of surrender and thence into eternal happiness and bliss in the servitude of the Lord, Sriman Narayana, in His Paramapada or the supreme Abode.

Gems from the Rig Veda

(Excerpts from this book by U.Ve.Dr.N.S.AnanthaRangaChar)

Unshakeable faith in God

It must be said at the very outset that unshakeable faith in god is the most remarkable feature of the Rig Veda Samhita. Here and there comes a rare reference to those who had not faith in God and it is immediately followed by a strong assertion of belief in the reality of His existence. So much so, such references are made to reaffirm in very strong terms the glory of the Supreme Being. The following mantras reveal this truth.

‘O people, the terrible about whom they ask where He is, and about whom some said, ‘He is not!’, is Indra. (R.V.II-12-5)

“O Ye desirous of valor, If He truly exists offer Him, that Indra, a great hymn. But here and there one speaks, ‘there is no Indra: who has seen Him? Whom should we pray?’ (VIII-89-3)

‘Place faith in Indra’ (I-103-5)

‘Does he not deprive non-believers of their wealth?’ (II-12-5)

'Behold all this wealth of Indra. Place faith in His valor. He is the obtainer of all cows, horses, trees, rivers and oceans and vast forests. (I-103-5)

'Which person can overcome him who has Thee alone as his wealth? The valiant can gain victory in the decisive battle only by placing faith in Thee'. (VII-32-14)

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